



The Family Programs Flyer

OPERATION READY FAMILIES MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2011

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5



Yellow Ribbon Events

February 9, 2011
297th Med Co
Farewell Ceremony
San Mateo, CA



Free Tax Assistance Events in California

Sponsored by the Computer and Communications Industry Association

Get the help you need and file your taxes for FREE. Volunteers will be on site to help you file. You qualify to file your Federal and State returns for free if ONE of the following applies to you for tax year 2010:

- You made \$31,000 or less
- You made \$58,000 or less and are active military
- You qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

It's QUICK! If you are due a refund and you e-file, you can get your money in as few as 12 days.

It's EASY! File your State and Federal taxes using TurboTax Freedom Edition.

You will need to provide:

*Copy of 2009 tax returns *Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer's Identification Number (ITIN) for each Family member *Proof of income including W2's and 1099 forms *Document of deductible expenses *Account and routing numbers of checking and savings accounts for direct deposit and faster refund!

For dates of Free Tax Assistance Events in your area, visit www.WEConnect.net!

February We Care Meetings

FEBRUARY 8	FEBRUARY 10
<u>BAKERSFIELD @ 6 PM</u> 559-217-9976 <u>CHICO @ 6:30 PM</u> 530-513-0478 <u>SACRAMENTO @ 6:30 PM</u> 916-416-8320 <u>SANTA ROSA @ 6:30 PM</u> 707-974-8004	<u>WALNUT CREEK @ 6:30 PM</u> 707-580-3319
FEBRUARY 12	FEBRUARY 15
<u>BELL @ 11:30 AM</u> 213-503-4472 <u>ESCONDIDO @ 12 PM</u> 619-405-7190	<u>MODESTO @ 6:30 PM</u> 209-402-4114 <u>VISALIA @ 7 PM</u> 559-217-9976
FEBRUARY 22	FEBRUARY 23
<u>FRESNO @ 6:30 PM</u> 559-994-6102	<u>LOS ALAMITOS @ 6 PM</u> 562-370-7680 <u>PASO ROBLES @ 6 PM</u> 805-896-4029 <u>SAN BERNARDINO @ 5 PM</u> 909-801-9411 <u>VENTURA @ 7 PM</u> 805-431-3866
FEBRUARY 26	
<u>AZUSA @ 12 PM</u> 818-383-8643 <u>SAN DIEGO 12 PM</u> 760-828-7116	PLEASE CALL THE NUMBER LISTED TO CONFIRM DATE, TIME, & LOCATION OF MEETING PRIOR TO ATTENDING

Start Small. Think Big®

The Department of Defense (DoD) Will launch the 2011 *Military Saves Campaign* with *Military Saves Week*, February 20-27, 2011.

The Campaign is conducted annually in cooperation with the official DoD Financial Readiness Campaign nonprofit partner, the Consumer Federation of America, as part of the larger nationwide America Saves Campaign.

Reducing debt and saving for the future are two goals all Service-members and their Families can start working toward immediately. This Campaign offers encouragement and guidance to motivate Military Families to start building long-term financial wealth.

Members can set a savings goal and take the savings pledge by registering on www.militarysaves.org



Happy Valentine's Day!
Love,
Family Programs

*"Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself.
It's what you do for others."
-Danny Thomas*





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February 10th Travelling Commissary Sale!

The Moffett Field Commissary is traveling again and hosting an **On-site Sale at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, California!**
Take advantage of spectacular savings on popular grocery items at this Commissary On-site Sale.

Where: Coast Guard Island
Building #16 in the Gymnasium
Campbell Blvd
Alameda, CA 94501

When: Thursday February 10th, 2011
9 am to 5 pm



National Guard and Reserve members; military retirees; and active duty military Service-members and dependents can take advantage of the great savings at the Commissary. All authorized commissary shoppers are invited to the sale. The Commissary has expanded its reach to Guard and Reserve members in particular by bringing the benefit to you via these On-site Sales to areas with military populations not served by a nearby commissary. Sale items may include paper products; soap and cleaning products; canned goods; sodas; sport drinks; water; laundry detergents; and a variety of other products.

Commissaries, operated by the Defense Commissary Agency, provide groceries to military personnel, retirees, and their families at U.S. military installations around the world. Shoppers save an average 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices. Customers must present an appropriate Department of Defense ID card that authorizes commissary privileges in order to shop. Cash, checks, debit cards, and credit cards are accepted for payment. The use of coupons is highly encouraged!

Your On-Site Sale - "It's Worth the Trip!"

Contact: Moffett Field Commissary POC: Raul Abrego/Brandon Montgomery PH: (650) 603-9981



Love is action. It's clear, it's kind, it's effortless, and it's irresistible.

~Bryron Katie



Family Assistance Network News from the Field

Once again, we had another great "We Care" meeting in Walnut Creek. The armory was buzzing while the kids played with our new Child and Youth equipment. Some children were engaged in a fierce game of Mario Kart which was displayed on our new "giant" movie



theater screen. Others were racing around the armory alongside 1SG Bledsoe on our new Child and Youth scooters. The armory was filled with children laughing, cheering, and having fun. Despite several of them having deployed Dads, they seemed to have forgotten at least for a while. It was not clear who was having more fun, the younger children or the 1SG who was the "BIG KID" of the evening! The adults enjoyed shredded chicken

tacos and short presentations from our guest speakers, Eloise Stone from the Contra Costa Blue Star Moms and Aaron Mattia from The Concord Vet Center. Eloise and Aaron explained how their organizations actively support our Servicemembers and their Families. Following their presentations, we had a surprise birthday celebration" for our FRG volunteer Sophia. Desiree, another FRG volunteer, had decorated the armory with birthday cheer and baked a Sunflower Birthday cake for Sophia. After enjoying the delicious cake and presenting Sophia with a handmade gift, it was time to go home. As usual, the kids did not want to leave and begged to return on the following evening. Since that was not possible, we said "Good night" and agreed to meet again next month.

By Mrs. Deborah Burrow, FAN Specialist, Walnut Creek



And in the Sacramento area...

- In January, new units deployed to Afghanistan got their Care packages that were sent with assistance of the FAN and the KinderCare Learning Center Elementary school.
- A deployed 649th mom got assistance from the FAN and local charity for home furnishings.
- A returning Veteran received emergency relief financial assistance from the Chaplain's fund.
- A retired California Air National Guard Veteran received emergency relief housing, food, and gas as he secured a new position since being unemployed for over a year.
- The Department of Mental Health, State of California learns of the FAN and Family Programs through a training/meeting with Lt Col Kimberly Lalley, State Family Programs Director; CPT Lance Friis, Behavioral Health Clinical officer; and Ms. Julia Crain, Sacramento FAN Specialist.





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Southern California Family Readiness Group Leader Brings Home Story of Fallen Soldier...

Courtney Faith Vera of Lake Elsinore has been associated with the United States Armed Forces her entire life, first as a Marine Corps "brat" and now as a California Army National Guard spouse with children. She is currently the Family Readiness Group Leader for the 79th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and Bravo Company, 79th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. She works to bring awareness to the public about Military Service men and women and their Families. Vera recently stopped in to visit a military family in Escondido, CA. In the spirit of her work with the Armed Services, here is Vera's story (in her own words) about that visit:

Sergeant Garner from Bravo Company, 79th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and his heavily pregnant girlfriend headed to a Southern California hospital earlier this month for the birth of their first child, a son with a special name: Jack Monti Stevens Garner. Jack is special because he is named after Staff Sergeant Jared Monti, who lost his life while desperately trying to save a fellow Soldier who lay wounded and helpless. Staff Sergeant Monti's legacy will live on forever. Not just through Family and friends but through his namesake, Jack Monti Stevens Garner. The tie between Sergeant Monti and Sergeant Garner, who is based in Escondido, can be traced back, but June 21, 2006 -- a dreadful day on a mountain in Afghanistan -- is what stands out.



Jack Monti Stevens Garner & Ms. Courtney Faith Vera

Recalling that day, Sergeant Garner said bullets and rockets whizzed by so close they ripped his weapon out of his hand. He used his body to shield radioman Sergeant Chris Grzecki as he called in air support. Sergeant Garner and Sergeant Grzecki were two of 16 Soldiers from the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division who were supporting a much larger group 2,600 feet below them. Suddenly, the 16 Soldiers heard enemy fire lighting up trees above the ridge they were holding. Mortars were raining down and there was no visibility.

When the smoke began to clear, one could see Private First Class James lying on his stomach. He was seriously wounded. Staff Sergeant Patrick Lybert was already dead. An RPG had torn through Private Bradbury's arm. Sergeant Monti wasn't giving up and he wasn't going to allow his Soldiers to either. He called in artillery and airstrikes, but Bradbury's cries were getting weaker. His man was slipping away. "That's my guy. I am going to get him."

He would not make it back. On his third attempt to save his Soldier, Sergeant Monti fell into a hellacious storm of RPGs and bullets just feet away from Private First Class Bradbury. Sergeant Monti's last words were, "I've made my peace with God. Tell my Family that I love them." Finally, the remaining Soldiers heard air support arrive and the Taliban force begin to retreat.

Staff Sergeant Cunningham and Private First Class Smith accounted for the soldiers, including Private First Class Bradbury. He was seriously wounded but alive and able to communicate. He was going to make it. When the medical helicopter finally arrived, a stretcher was lowered down. With Staff Sergeant Heathe Craig, a medic, by his side, Private First Class James was placed on the stretcher and hoisted into the air to the helicopter. Staff Sergeant Craig came back down for Private First Class Bradbury, who was going to survive and live the legacy of the heroic efforts of Staff Sergeant Monti on that mountain. The two were being hoisted into the air, but what happened next was horrendous and unthinkable. There was a loud thump: The hoist on the stretcher snapped. Staff Sergeant Craig and Private First Class Bradbury fell to their deaths.

There is no happy ending to this story. In September, President Barack Obama contacted Jared Monti's father, Paul, to let him know his son was being posthumously promoted to Sergeant First Class and would receive a Medal of Honor. Sergeant First Class Monti was the sixth man to receive the Medal of Honor in the War on Terrorism and the first in Afghanistan. All were posthumous, but there is no comfort. Paul Monti said, "I'd much rather have him than any medal." I know there are no words to express the gratitude to the Monti Family, but they can take pride in knowing that a comrade thought so highly of their son that he named his first-born after him.

Learn more about Sergeant First Class Monti and the scholarship in his name at www.sfcjaredcmonti.org.

Calling all would-be Southern California Volunteers...

Courtney Faith Vera needs volunteers. She's involved with the "Welcome Me Home" Project with Michelle Penn, Operation Showers of Appreciation, and The Appleseed Project, as well as the 79th BSTB FRG Leader and B Co, 79th BSTB FRG Leader.

Would you like to help her make a difference? We need people just like you throughout the area to donate time, energy, and experience in a variety of areas.

Together we can help Soldiers and their families not only meet essential daily needs but work toward a brighter future.

Volunteers say they feel rewarded many times over for the help they provide in making a difference in the lives of our Soldiers and their Families.

Call Faith today at 951-471-1611 or 818-825-1900 to find out more about how you can help!

Calling all would-be Volunteers from all over California ...

If you are interested in helping Families become more knowledgeable and self reliant; promoting Guard member and Family readiness; and or contributing to the wellbeing and esprit de corps of unit members, contact Senior Family Readiness Support Assistants:

Ms. Bonnie Boggess at bonnie.boggess@us.army.mil or Ms. Judy Shannon at judy.shannon@us.army.mil

FP Flyer would like to thank Ms. Vera, the Monti & Garner Families, and Lake Elsinore-Wildomarpatch.com for sharing their story.





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Make your own FREE Family Network!

On Sesame Street Family Connections you can:



- Send a Message
- Create Artwork
- Post a Photo
- Share Audio
- Add a Video
- Keep in touch!

Find out more at:

www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org

Casting Military Families!

Producers of Cartoon Network's "Hole in the Wall" game show are currently casting in the Southern California region and are very interested in casting Military Families.

How it works: teams of three compete against each other by getting through barrier walls speeding toward them with weird and wacky cut-out shapes.

To apply you MUST:

- Assemble a team of three people. Youths must be between 10-17 years old, and at least one adult (18 years or older) must be included.
- Be able to swim and engage in some strenuous physical activity

Teams may consist of Families, kids, parents, athletic teams, teachers, coaches, etc. All teams that are cast on the show will receive \$600 (win or lose) and have the time of their lives!

To watch clips of the show visit: www.holeinthewallcasting.com

If you are interested and have a team together, contact Cynthia Magana at cynthiatvcasting@gmail.com or call 818-528-8781



Operation Military Kids Hero Packs

Hero Packs serve as a tangible expression of support for military Families from their communities and C filled by non-military youth with mementos and items designed to help connect kids with their deploy salute to military children & youth for their strength and sacrifices while parents are deployed. A Hero I adults in a valuable community service effort that also builds awareness and fosters community support families.

If you are interested in participating in this project please visit:

www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/heropacks.aspx



Disney's Armed Forces Salute continued for 2011!



There's great news from Disney; they have renewed their Military Salute discount well into 2011 for BOTH Disneyland and Disneyworld. The Disney company has just announced a new Military discount offer continuing through 1 October 2011! This offer includes both steeply discounted theme park tickets and outstanding discounts on Disney resorts for both Military Servicemembers and their Families!

For more information visit:

<http://www.militarydisneytips.com/Disney-Armed-Forces-Salute.html>

Horses for Heros and Queen of Hearts Therapeutic Riding Center Open House



When: Saturday February 5th
2-4 pm

Where: Queen of Hearts Ranch
6405 Dana Avenue
Mira Loma CA, 91752

*Assisting Veterans and their Families
heal from physical, emotional, and
mental traumas of war through the
unconditional acceptance of horses.*

For more information, please contact Robin at kilcoyner@live.com



With a special meet-n-greet with horses, clients, and a rider demonstration at 2:30 pm.

